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Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 013713

FOLLOWING REPEAT MEXICO 901 ACTION SECSTATE 18 JAN

QUOTE:C O N F I D E N T I A L MEXICO 00901

DEPT. PASS JUSTICE FOR THE ATTORNEY GENERAL; WHITE HOUSE SITUATION ROOM FOR PETER BOURNE; DEA FOR THE ADMINISTRATOR

EO 11652: XGDS-1
TAGS: SNAR, MX
SUBJECT: NARCOTICS - GOM REQUESTS ELIMINATION OF DEA SPOTTERS

REF: MEXICO 00258

1. SUMMARY: ON JANUARY 13 ATTORNEY GENERAL'S OFFICE REQUESTED THAT EMBASSY REDUCE BY HALF THE DEA TDY PERSONNEL SCHEDULED TO ARRIVE JANUARY 15 TO SUPPORT GOM ERADICATION PROGRAM, AND ADDED THAT THIS SMALLER NUMBER WOULD BE EXPECTED TO LEAVE FOLLOWING A THREE WEEK, COUNTRY-WIDE VISUAL RECONNAISSANCE EFFORT. AMBASSADOR SPOKE WITH ATTORNEY GENERAL (AG) FLORES, NOTED THAT HIS DEPUTY HAD APPROVED PLAN AS PROPOSED, AND REQUESTED THAT ATTORNEY GENERAL PERMIT PROGRAM TO PROCEED AS SCHEDULED
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UNTIL ATTORNEY GENERAL BELL VISITS MEXICO, AT WHICH TIME ATTORNEYS GENERAL COULD DISCUSS PROBLEM. FLORES AGREED TO DEFER CHANGES UNTIL HE CAN DISCUSS SITUATION WITH ATTORNEY GENERAL BELL. END SUMMARY.

2. REFTEL REPORTED THAT PLANNED DEA SUPPORT OF GOM ERADICATION PROGRAM FACED NO OBJECTIONS FROM ATTORNEY

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GENERAL'S OFFICE. THE DISCUSSION UPON WHICH THIS AP-
PROVAL WAS BASED WAS FORMALIZED IN AN EXCHANGE OF LETTERS
BETWEEN THE EMBASSY AND DEPUTY ATTORNEY GENERAL ALBA-
LEYVA ON JANUARY 10 AND 11.

3. ON JANUARY 13 ACTING NARCOTICS ATTACHE SAUCEDO MET
WITH THE ATTORNEY GENERAL'S EXECUTIVE OFFICER, FERNANDO
BAEZA, AT LATTER'S REQUEST. BAEZA OPENED CONVERSATION
BY BRIEFING SAUCEDO ON ATTORNEY GENERAL'S BELIEF THAT
IT WAS NECESSARY TO CURTAIL U.S. PARTICIPATION IN THE
ERADICATION CAMPAIGN. HE STATED THAT GOM WAS PLANNING
A COUNTRY-WIDE RECONNAISSANCE EFFORT BEGINNING JANUARY 20.
APPROXIMATELY ONE-HALF OF THE TDY PERSONNEL PLANNED BY
DEA WOULD BE PERMITTED TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS RECON
ACTIVITY, WHICH WOULD LAST APPROXIMATELY THREE WEEKS,
FOLLOWING WHICH THEY WOULD BE EXPECTED TO LEAVE MEXICO.

4. ACCORDING TO BAEZA, EVEN THIS PARTICIPATION WOULD
REQUIRE THAT THE AG'S OFFICE FOREGO MILITARY PARTICIPA-
TION IN THE RECON ACTIVITY SINCE ONLY SO MANY AIRCRAFT
SEATS WERE AVAILABLE. HE ADDED THAT THE ATTORNEY GENERAL
IS OF THE OPINION THAT DEA PARTICIPATION SERVES NO
PURPOSE SINCE THE TDY PERSONNEL KNOW LESS ABOUT POPPY
CHARACTERISTICS THAN MEXICAN PERSONNEL, THEY HAVE A
NEGATIVE IMPACT ON MEXICAN EMPLOYEES WHO FEEL THAT THE
ATTORNEY GENERAL IS USING AMERICANS AS WATCHDOGS, THEY
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CONSTITUTE A POLITICAL LIABILITY, AND THAT THE PRESENCE
OF FOREIGN PARTICIPANTS OFFENDS THE EXTREME SENSITIVITY
OF THE MEXICAN MILITARY. BAEZA OPINED THAT THE GOOD
WILL AND WHOLEHEARTED PARTICIPATION OF THE MILITARY IS
MUCH MORE ESSENTIAL THAN THE PARTICIPATION OF DEA PER-
SONNEL. USG COOPERATION, BAEZA ADDED, SHOULD BE IN
AREAS IN WHICH THE GOM IS NOT SELF-SUFFICIENT, AS HE BE-
LIEVES IT IS IN SPOTTING AND VERIFICATION.

5. IN VIEW OF BAEZA'S REMARKS, AMBASSADOR PERSONALLY
SPOKE WITH FLORES AFTERNOON OF JANUARY 13. HE NOTED THAT
TIMING OF DECISION WAS MOST UNFORTUNATE AS AT
THAT MOMENT THE PERSONNEL INVOLVED WERE EN ROUTE TO
MEXICO. NOTING THAT ATTORNEY GENERAL BELL IS SCHEDULED
TO VISIT MEXICO IN LESS THAN THREE WEEKS, AMBASSADOR
REQUESTED FLORES TO PERMIT PARTICIPATION TO PROCEED AS
SCHEDULED AND SUGGESTED THAT THE TWO ATTORNEYS GENERAL
COULD BEST DISCUSS THIS ISSUE AT THAT TIME. FLORES
AGREED. PERSONNEL HAVE SINCE ARRIVED AND ARE NOW BEING
DEPLOYED TO PARTICIPATE IN COUNTRY-WIDE RECONNAISSANCE
SWEEP.

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6. EMBASSY COMMENTS AND ANALYSIS OF OPTIONS OPEN TO US
WILL FOLLOW IN SEPARATE MESSAGES. LUCEY
UNQUOTE CHRISTOPHER

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